The World

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THE LESSON OF CHICAGO.

There is no mystery about the horror at Chicago, and its lesson for other communities is written in letters of flame. Locked exits and the failure of an asbestos curtain to work doubtless aggravated the calamity, but they were incidental conditions which every manager elsewhere will say could not possibly be repeated in his theatre. The bottom cause of the disaster—the thing that might bring on a similar catastrophe anywhere else—was the presence of masses of inflammable material on the stage.

The Iroquois was called "fireproof," and the architect and owners express their amazement that such an accident should have happened in it. So is a brick furnace fireproof, but that would be small consolation to a person shut inside of it on a pile of burning kindling. The thing that ought to be branded into the mind of every theatrical designer is that the chief object of fireproofing a theatre is not to protect the building, but to save the people in it. An audience would be safer in a wooden building with non-combustible fittings than in a fireproof building with inflammable fittings.

A stage filled with light wooden and muslin drops soaked in oil is as dangerous as a powder magazine. It is easy to subject every bit of scenery used in a theatre to a fireproofing process that would make any such calamity as that at Chicago impossible even if stage hands should be careless and asbestos curtains should stick. How many managers in New York have taken that precaution?

STARTED AT LAST.

At last New York is preparing to do some solid work for the Democratic National Convention. At the citizens' meeting yesterday an organization was effected by the appointment of an Executive Committee, headed by Mr. John D. Crimmins, with Mr. J. Edward Simmons as treasurer. The Merchants' Association has offered to put its admirable clerical staff at the service of the committee. Mr. Crimmins has reported substantial progress in raising the guarantee fund, and altogether the outlook is promising.

How much educational work there is to be done among the members of the Democratic National Committee may be realized from the fact that even a well-informed New York paper has admitted that the choice of this city would involve long railroad journeys for the delegates. Of course, that idea comes from looking at the map, without stopping to reflect that Nevada, with a greater area than New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and Connecticut combined, sends only six delegates to the convention, while those States send 192. The truth is that the majority of the delegates can reach New York more easily than any other place. This is a fact that must be thoroughly impressed upon the committee.

Matrimony Blindfolded.—Another innocent girl's life has been blighted by a marriage with a bigamous scoundrel. We laugh at the formalities that precede a European wedding, but at least they have the advantage that the cordon of lawyers and notaries is very unlikely to be run by a man who has a wife on the next block.

THE RAID ON THE CHILDREN.

That a city with a budget of over $100,000,000 a year, of which $23,000,000 is for schools, should have to close its playgrounds, recreation centres and vacation schools for lack of a couple of hundred thousand dollars is preposterous on its face. Between the Board of Estimate and the Board of Education the rights of children and parents alike are being wantonly sacrificed. Comptroller Grout insists that there is plenty of room for economy in the school budget without cutting off these necessary facilities, and in the face of things that seems reasonable. We know there is waste in every other department, and there is good ground for believing that there is some in the Board of Education. Are there no unnecessary clerks and no high-salaried superfluities to serve as subjects for economy without beginning on the things of most vital necessity? It looks as if the Board of Education were trying to protect its budget by putting the things most cherished by the public in the line of fire, like an army shielding itself behind women and children. But wherever the blame for this unhallowed cut may lie, some way must be found to prevent the threatened outrage.

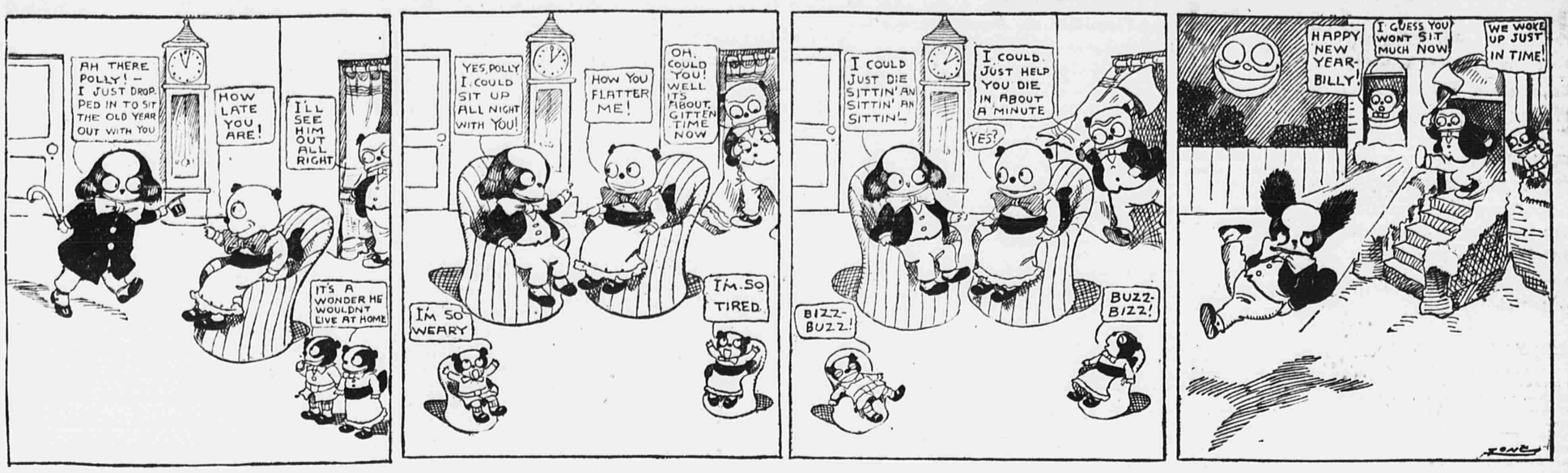
"Educational Publicity" Needed.—There is a hurry call in the cotton market for that literary bureau of Mr. Sully. If it waits much longer the thing most needed will be an ambulance.

THE COMING THOUSAND-FOOTER.

The thousand-foot ship is coming fast. Hardly have we become accustomed to the idea of the 730-foot Baltic when we are told that the White Star line has ordered a new steamer 755 feet long. More than three-quarters of the distance to the thousand-foot limit has already been traversed, and we have only 245 feet more to go.

Sixty-five years ago the world was startled by the appearance of the Great Western, the first steamer to exceed 200 feet in length. Seven years later the Great Britain reached 300 feet. Leaving out the abnormal Great Eastern, 680 feet long, turned out in 1858, the first 400-foot ship was the Oceanic, in 1871. In 1881 the Servia touched the 500-foot mark. The Campania and Lucania reached 600 feet in 1893, and the second Oceanic 700 in 1899. Now we are going up to 755. We have averaged an increase of 100 feet every eleven or twelve years, and of late the rate of growth has been faster. By the time we get those thousand-foot docks that Secretary Root has vetoed for New York, there will be some thousand-foot ships to go into them.

Billy Bowwow and Polly Pugdoodle * * Billy Sees the Old Year Out and Polly's Pa Sees Billy Out



Can a Woman Love Two Men at Once?

By Nixola Greeley-Smith.

CAN a woman love two men at once? This question, asked and answered in all good faith by the enterprising members of the Eclectic Club several years ago, to the amazement of conservative husbands and fathers who read in the next day's newspapers that the fair ladies discussing it had come to the conclusion that women not only could, but that they did, was revived this week by a similar problem presented in Augustus Thomas's new play of "The Other Girl."

Catharine Fallon, engaged to a young society man, succumbs to the attractions of "Kid" Garvey, the pugilist, and while torn by the conflicting feelings which the situation inspires, propounds the query to a sympathetic society matron.

And yet the question is one to which only one answer is possible. For whatever a man's capacity for dual affection—and from the days of Adam and Eve and Lilith to the lates divorce in fashionable society his record for plural inspiration has been pretty much the same—a woman, if she loves at all, does so with her whole mind and soul and body, and consequently loves but one.

Of course there are many women, comfortable wives and mothers though they be, who have never loved in their lives, and who would be more alarmed at the first hint of an incipient love fever in their veins than at the more easily diagnosed symptoms of cholera or the black death. These women feel for their husbands, if they are good to them, a calm bovine affection that might easily be and sometimes is bestowed upon several other more or less worthy masculine objects at the same time, without jeopardy to commandments or statute books.

And there are other women of chameleon character who cannot be alone with the same man more than two or three times without beginning to feel that he inspires them with something more than friendship. Whom these women marry and whether they love one man or a dozen afterward is entirely a matter of accident or opportunity, and, though they usually regard themselves as more than adept in the art and artlessness of the tender passion, they really never experience any feeling worthy to be called love.

When a woman really loves one man other men, save as interesting specimens that by careful study may furnish interesting side lights on the character and tastes of the beloved, which even for her always has its dark and cobwebby corners, do not exist.

The most entertaining man in the world may talk to her for an hour and fail to interest her for a moment until she discovers that the clothes he wears are just like those Tom had on that day they went to the opening baseball game or that his necktie is very like that horrid pink thing Tom promised he would throw away. The handsomest matinee hero fails to get a second glance from her unless he happens to suggest similar memories and associations.

Tom alters and pervades a woman's whole thoughts so entirely that under its influence the most selfish and most thoroughly tired girl will give her seat up to the most sour old woman in a car simply because she says to herself, "You know you would get up if it were his mother." No matter what her previous calibre, he, him, his is all she knows, once she has fallen in love. And, after all, it is all she needs to know.

LOVE.

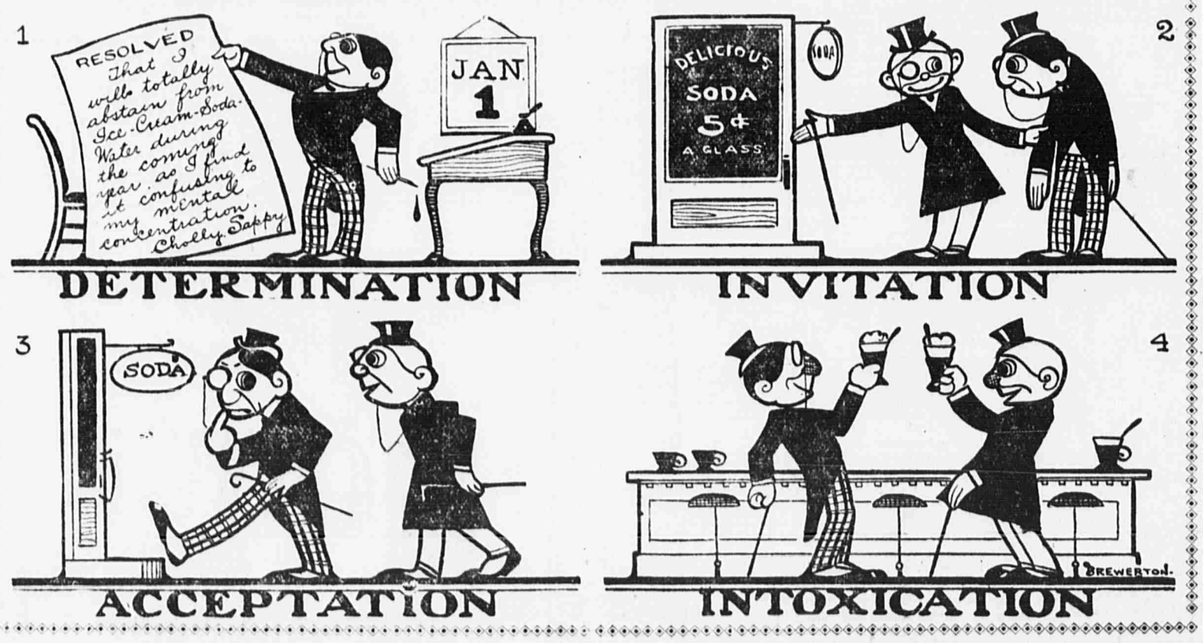
Let me but love my love without disguise,
Nor wear a mask of fashion old or new,
Nor wait to speak till I can hear a clue,
Nor play a part to shine in others' eyes,
Nor bow my knees to what my heart denies;
But what I am, to that let me be true,
And let me worship where my love is due,
And so through love and worship let me rise;
For love is but the heart's immortal thirst
To be completely known and all forgiven;
Even as sinful souls that come to heaven,
So take me, love, and understand my worst,
And pardon it, for love, because confessed,
And let me find in thee, my love, my best.

—Henry Van Dyke in the Outlook.

The Important Mr. Pewee, the Great Little Man.

He Goes to a Masquerade Ball and Poses as the Giant Goliath.

Little Tragedies Strikingly Told in Four Words.



DRAWING THE LINE.

"Would you object to stating how you made your first thousand dollars?" said the heart-to-heart interviewer.

"No," answered Senator Sorghum, "but in discussing this matter I want you to draw the line strictly at the first thousand."—Washington Star.

ABSURD.

"Are you sure," asked the captain of industry, "that you love my daughter?"

"Come, I say," replied the Duke, "you're not going to be sentimental at your time of life, are you?"—Chicago Record-Herald.

AS OLD AS ANN.

"It was a pretty old turkey that our landlady gave us."

"Well, you ought to respect the aged."

"Not when the aged is tough."

"Well, how old was it?"

"Old enough, I think, to be called [illegible]."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

EASILY EXPLAINED.

The teacher called the bright boy up to her desk. "Now, Homer," she said, "can you tell the class why Paul Revere was so successful in his ride?"

"Because he didn't start in an automobile," responded the bright boy.—Chicago News.

Better Plays, Not Cut Rates, for Theatres.

"I SEE," said the Cigar Store Man, "that there's a movement on foot to reduce the price of the best seats in the Broadway theatres to $1.50."

"Unless the managers put up good shows," replied the Man Higher Up, "they can't get the people into their houses if they admit them on trading stamps or cigarette coupons. New York has got beyond the stage where kicks are due for a difference of half a dollar in the cost of enjoyment, but New York has never passed and never will get to the stage where it will stand to put up two plunks for a shine performance.

"The people will hang onto the orchestra rail by their eyebrows to see first-class performers in a first-class play, but they would rather stay at home and play pinochle than cough up their hard-earned scads to the manager of a theatre to have their intelligence insulted. Good plays get the money. Good plays for Broadway are scarcer than dollar bills in a Salvation Army Christmas pot.

"Erudite critics get up and roast the managers for this, and to some extent the managers are to blame. It would seem that if anybody ought to be able to tell a piece that would stand them up to the walls the manager ought to be the man. But the manager never knows. The best of them get stung. They spend thousands producing pieces that their bill-posters wouldn't sit through in a box.

"You seldom hear of failures in the popular-price houses. The combination theatres hang out the S. R. O. signs every night. The prices are cheap, but 50 cents for an orchestra seat is as much to an east-side playgoer as $2 is to the Broadway patron. Nearly every play put on in the cheap places makes good, because the playwrights who cater to the people give the people human nature and lay on their colors with a whitewash brush.

"Real wits on the stage can amuse; real humorists can write stuff for the stage that gets out to the coupon holders; but what counts is the old-time proposition of virtue getting its own reward. The $2 audience likes to see a play in which there is plenty of real human interest—characters that act like real people. Millionaires and paupers have their love affairs, their heartaches, their ups and downs, and all for the same reasons. Broadway audiences like their representations gilded to some extent and toned down a whole lot, but they will pay their money to see the villain get the oofty-gooft and the hero get the gy-url until the cows come home."

"There ought to be plenty of playwrights," ventured the Cigar Store Man.

"There are too many playwrights," said the Man Higher Up. "Most of them ought to be working for the Street-Cleaning Department."

CZAR'S MAGIC RING.

The Czar of Russia is said to be very superstitious and to have great confidence in relics. He wears a ring in which he believes is embedded a piece of the true cross. It was originally one of the treasures of the Vatican and was presented to an ancestor of the Czar for diplomatic reasons. The value which its owner sets upon the ring with its embedded relic is shown by the following fact:

Some years ago he was travelling from St. Petersburg to Moscow when he suddenly discovered that he had forgotten the ring. The train was stopped immediately and a special messenger sent back in an express for it, nor would the Czar allow the train to move until, eight hours afterward, the messenger returned with the ring.

Pointed Paragraphs.

A hair in the head is worth two in the brush.

Only the rich can afford to eat things out of season.

A woman's silence is more significant than a man's words.

According to the popular idea a philanthropist is an easy mark.

The kissable girl is the one who pretends she doesn't want to be kissed.

Instead of trying to convince a woman the wise man proceeds to coax her.

A man always looks well when he is looking for another man who owes him money.

It's a smart woman who can make her own clothes so that her neighbors will not suspect it.

Even if the woman of to-day did look like the portraits in fashion magazines she wouldn't be happy.—Chicago News.

A Polyglot Army.

The Czar of Russia commands the greatest armed force in the world. His army consists of 1,555 battalions of infantry, 1,253 squadrons of cavalry and 3,778 cannon. Every nationality overland from Europe to China is represented in this composite army.